

VZCZCXRO2527  
PP RUEHBZ RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN  
DE RUEHOR #0209/01 0770846  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 180846Z MAR 09  
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5646  
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHMFSS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 GABORONE 000209

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE PLEASE PASS USAID  
STATE PLEASE PASS USTR WJACKSON  
PRETORIA FOR USAID

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [ETRD](#) [EAID](#) [ZI](#) [BC](#)  
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
SALOMAO

REF: A. STATE 7798  
    [B.](#) STATE 18852  
    [C.](#) STATE 18601

[¶](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Ambassador Nolan had his first office call with Dr. Tomaz Salomao, the Executive Secretary of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), at SADC headquarters in Gaborone March 13. The Ambassador presented the letter designating him as the Secretary's Special Representative to SADC and expressed the U.S. government's desire to work closely with the regional community on both development and peace and security. Salomao praised the work of the USAID-funded Southern African Competitiveness Hub (Trade Hub), and was especially pleased with the assistance SADC had received from the Hub in preparing for the launch of the community's Free Trade Area (FTA). The Ambassador and ES Salomao discussed the January 2009 Presidential Determination regarding U.S. defense cooperation with SADC, reviewed recent events in Zimbabwe, and discussed a possible multi-sector assistance agreement between USAID and SADC that would cover USAID's regional activities which could include economic growth, agriculture, and HIV/AIDS. END SUMMARY.

[¶](#)2. (SBU) Ambassador Nolan met with Dr. Tomaz Salomao, the Executive Secretary of the Southern African Development Community, at SADC headquarters in Gaborone March 13. Though the two had met previously at diplomatic corps events, this was their first office call. Embassy Gaborone had been seeking this appointment for months, but schedule conflicts and Dr. Salomao's extensive travels had forced its long postponement. Ambassador was accompanied by DCM and Pol/Econ Chief. Dr. Salomao was accompanied by one of his publicity officers (who photographed the presentation of the Secretary's letter), but he did not bring any policy aides or action officers from the Secretariat into the meeting.

Praise for the Trade Hub

---

[¶](#)3. (U) As he presented the letter designating him as the Secretary of State's Special Representative to SADC, Ambassador Nolan expressed the USG's desire to work closely with the regional community on both development and peace and security matters. ES Salomao said that he had worked closely with former Ambassador Canavan and looked forward to doing the same with Ambassador Nolan. Salomao noted that he thinks that the Southern African Competitiveness Hub (funded by USAID) is "doing a commendable job" and he was grateful to Ambassador Canavan for working to keep the Hub in Gaborone and working closely with SADC. Salomao also said that the Trade Hub staff were "instrumental" to SADC as the organization launched its Free Trade Area (FTA) in 2008. He

explained that he expects SADC will continue to work closely with the Hub as they work toward eventual Customs Union and a wider FTA to include the East African Community and COMESA.

#### Defense Cooperation

---

¶4. (SBU) The Ambassador was pleased to hear that USG trade facilitation support has been so valuable to SADC, and he noted that he hopes that our cooperation will continue and deepen. He explained that in January 2009, former President Bush signed a "Presidential Determination" (PD) which lays the groundwork for future USG defense cooperation with SADC. The Ambassador provided Salomao with a copy of the PD, some background information about the PD (derived from Ref A), and a copy of the written questions that the Department (Ref B) has requested that post provide to SADC concerning End-Use Monitoring Agreements and other legal processes. Salomao did not indicate whether or not he was familiar with the PD, but seemed receptive to the general idea of defense cooperation. The Ambassador said that Pol/Econ Chief and OSC Chief would follow up on the list of questions with appropriate Secretariat staff at a later date. Salomao said that the SADC Standby Brigade had been launched in Lusaka in August 2007 and is preparing for its first exercise in September ¶2009. This exercise, Salomao said, is expected to help link the brigade into the African Union's overall plans for a continent-wide force. The location of the exercise is still being discussed, and Salomao said that it may be hosted in South Africa, Angola, or Tanzania.

#### Zimbabwe

---

GABORONE 00000209 002 OF 003

¶5. (SBU) Ambassador Nolan explained that President Obama had renewed the USG's sanctions against certain Zimbabwean individuals and companies in early March 2009 for an additional year, but noted that these sanctions could be rolled back sooner if sufficient progress occurs. He provided Salomao with a non-paper regarding the USG's current position on Zimbabwe (derived from Ref C) and a copy of the White House announcement regarding sanctions renewal. However, the Ambassador also emphasized that USG humanitarian assistance to Zimbabwe is significant and continues. He emphasized that the USG will consider additional development assistance if/when we see real evidence of political change and genuine powersharing. Ambassador Nolan recognized the release from jail of Deputy Agriculture Minister - designate Roy Bennet and other political prisoners and said that some progress is being made, but noted that more progress is needed before any change in USG policy.

¶6. (SBU) Dr. Salomao responded by giving the Ambassador an overview of SADC's efforts over the past year to broker talks between ZANU-PF and MDC. Salomao prefaced his remarks by reminding the Ambassador that he comes from Mozambique, and said that his views are colored by his country's experience of over 16 years of brutal civil war. Salomao indicted that SADC spent from June to December 2008 "just trying to get the two sides to really talk to one another about the issues." He considered the talks in Harare on January 16, 2009 to have been "a major breakthrough" which set the stage for the January 26 Extraordinary Heads of State Summit in Pretoria, at which ZANU-PF and both factions of MDC finally agreed on a timeline for the enactment of the unity government. Dr. Salomao said that he now travels to Harare "from time to time" to give advice to the new government and encourage the parties to work together and put their differences aside. He said that based on his observations from visits to Harare and discussions at the recent Cape Town SADC Finance Ministers meeting, Salomao believes that "they (the unity government) are trying." He noted that the role of the unity government is to prepare for new, credible elections within three years and that SADC will continue to monitor the situation and offer support as needed. He believes that the Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) is

functioning and helps to resolve differences between the parties. Dr. Salomao said that his advice to the Zimbabwean leaders has been to deal with all sensitive issues and "not to sweep them under the carpet." Salomao emphasized that "SADC's only option is to support Zimbabwe." "Let's give them (the Zimbabwean parties) a chance," he repeated several times.

Increased USAID Engagement?

---

¶7. (U) The Ambassador also briefly followed up on the idea of a multi-sector USAID umbrella obligating agreement with SADC. This proposal was discussed by visiting USAID Pretoria officials with Dr. Salomao in October 2008. If SADC concurs, USAID would be interested in pursuing a multi-sector assistance agreement that would cover regional activities, including potentially economic growth, agriculture, environment, and HIV/AIDS. However, historically USG restrictions on support to Zimbabwe have been an obstacle to concluding such an obligating document, and those restrictions have not changed. Dr. Salomao told the Ambassador that SADC is still interested in pursuing a broad agreement with USAID, but did not comment on the impact of the Zimbabwe restrictions or how SADC might deal with this obstacle. The Ambassador explained that USAID Pretoria would follow-up directly with the Secretariat with more details.

COMMENT

---

¶8. (SBU) COMMENT: Though we are pleased that the Ambassador was able to meet with SADC Executive Secretary Salomao after many months of seeking the appointment, it is worrisome that he did not include any technical staff or action officers in the meeting who could follow-up as needed on the issues discussed. It is unclear whether the messages we passed, regarding the PD or the USAID umbrella agreement proposal for example, will be shared with the working level staff at the Secretariat for action. Pol/Econ Chief and OSC Chief will seek a meeting at the earliest opportunity to talk directly to Organ on Defense, Politics, and Security staff regarding the PD and the Department's questions about its

GABORONE 00000209 003 OF 003

implementation. However, we cannot guarantee a timely response to the Department's written questions will be forthcoming, as the institutional capacity at the Secretariat is challenged. It was interesting that Salomao did not press the Ambassador for increased USG assistance to Zimbabwe or any change to our existing policy. Why did Salomao fail to raise the issue of the \$5 billion in new donor assistance that Zimbabwe is seeking, a request supported by SADC? END COMMENT.

NOLAN